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# THE INDYPENDENT

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A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

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Coverage starts page 10

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# Occupying the Courthouse

BY ARI PAUL

Occupy Wall Street protesters started off the new year celebrating a major legal victory in New York City. After several progressive legal outfits challenged the New York Police Department's insistence on keeping barricades around Zuccotti Park, the city took them down Jan. 10. Officials were no longer able to defend the selectively enforced and unwritten park rules that violated a special zoning permit that requires park owner Brookfield Properties to keep the space permanently open for the public benefit.

The victory is a reminder that in the four months of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, it has relied on an army of legal supporters in the face of police repression and mass arrests. One such group is the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), which has been working around the clock, springing protesters from jail and documenting police tactics. The activist attorneys of the NLG are dedicated and well trained, but OWS has been a test like no other.

Gideon Oliver, head of the NLG's New York chapter, had a busy week during the Republican National Convention protests of 2004, in which 1,800 people were arrested. The 2004 RNC was a dramatic confrontation, but it lasted only a matter of days. "No one expected such a long standing occupation," Oliver said during an interview at his lower Manhattan office. "Since Sept. 17, we have increased our staff and volunteer legal workers." More than 2,000 have been arrested in the city since

the occupation began.

Because most OWS protesters who are arrested are charged with low-level offenses, the NLG is able to spring these people from jail with relative ease, with OWS working groups committed to setting aside money for bail. But, Oliver said, "More and more of these cases are being charged as felonies," adding that "it's reasonable to expect there will be an increasingly high bail set."

The NLG is, therefore, urging people to contribute either their time or money. It has a website devoted to this, at [nlg.org/occupy](http://nlg.org/occupy).

But more than just being on hand to post bail, the NLG is playing a central role in trying to bring to light the systemic police violence against people exercising their First Amendment rights. Oliver pointed to the first famous case of NYPD excess in OWS: An-

for accountability for the police who engage in that kind of violent conduct," he told *The Indypendent*, noting that the commander's punishment included docked vacation days and a transfer to Staten Island, where he resides. "It's a reward, at the end of the day. At least with respect to the supervisors, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly has the backs of the other bosses who stick their necks out this way very consistently."

Oliver continued, "The Police Department is going back to a lot of the RNC-style kettling and crowd control tactics and using force in individual arrests and cases and using more pepper spray. ...I think there's been an escalation in response to Occupy Wall Street."

OWS protesters are fighting back in the courts. More than 350 of the 700 people arrested for marching on the Brooklyn Bridge



**PEOPLE'S LAWYER:** Gideon Oliver, president of the NYC chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, stands on the bike ramp of the Brooklyn Bridge near where 700 Occupy Wall Street protesters were arrested Oct. 1.

thony Bologna, the commanding officer who was caught on tape pepper-spraying nonviolent female protesters. Police advocates have countered that these acts are isolated incidents and are dealt with internally, but Oliver sees it otherwise.

"There's very little mechanism

Oct. 1 are taking their cases to trial, arguing that police led them onto the bridge before carrying out a mass arrest.

While two city councilmembers have been violently arrested in the past several months — one of them during the eviction of OWS in Zuccotti Park in November — that

## CONSPIRING TO USE THE FIRST AMENDMENT

New York is not the only city where the power of the legal system is being more zealously deployed against the Occupy movement.

In San Diego, police arrested four Occupy protesters Jan. 11 for heckling Mayor Jerry Sanders during his annual State of the City address and slapped each of them with a felony conspiracy charge. The felony charge increased the protesters' bail from \$500 to \$10,000. They each face up to two years in jail if convicted. A police spokesperson told [voicesofsandiego.org](http://voicesofsandiego.org), that conspiracy charges had been applied because the four protesters had chanted from identical scripts.

—John Tarleton

body's police oversight committee has never vigorously investigated aggressive tactics against protesters. (The committee is chaired by Peter Vallone, Jr., an outspoken NYPD advocate.)

Further, there is no real way to deal with NYPD overreach, despite the department's own Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) and the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB). "It's not like they're apolitical," Oliver said of the IAB. "The CCRB has no teeth in a sense because it doesn't have the authority to punish officers. It can only make recommendations, so everybody knows at the end of the day, it's going to end up in-house. That's not really an effective accountability mechanism. Officers can eat a couple of CCRB decisions. It's not the end of the world."

The result is a dangerous one for democracy. "One of the reasons why the Police Department acts the way that it does is to chill people, to scare them from being on the streets by making it unpredictable on how you can stay safe," Oliver said.

He added that the city's unwillingness to confront excessive force and unjust arrests means the taxpayers have to pay the litigation costs and the settlements between the city and the victims in class-action lawsuits.

"We're going to be paying for the police department's behavior in 2004 for the RNC protest litigation for a long time," Oliver said. "This is only repeating and in some ways escalating the same problems."

## NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD

### A SHORT HISTORY

Founded in 1937 "to emphasize human rights over property rights," the National Lawyers Guild has provided legal support to just about every left-leaning protest movement over the past 75 years — from striking autoworkers in the

1930s to 1960s-era civil rights and antiwar activists to today's Occupiers. NLG members also helped prosecute Nazis at the Nuremberg Trials, participated in drafting the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and pioneered storefront law offices for low-income clients, which became the model for the community-based offices of the Legal Services

Corporation. With their clipboards and fluorescent green ballcaps, NLG legal observers are fixtures at protests in many cities. The organization currently has 4,000 members nationwide with 800 based in New York City. For more information, see [nlg.org](http://nlg.org) or [nlgnyc.org](http://nlgnyc.org).

—John Tarleton



# Dreaming Big

## OWS ORGANIZERS PREPARE SPRING OFFENSIVE

BY NATHAN SCHNEIDER

It's bizarre how often nowadays one hears Occupy Wall Street talked about in the past tense — bizarre, especially, if one was at the strategy meeting of OWS's Direct Action group on Jan. 8. Around 150 of the movement's most restless radicals sat on the hardwood floor and in folding chairs at 16 Beaver Street, a block from the Charging Bull in downtown Manhattan. The purpose was a big-picture strategic discussion about where the movement's tactics had taken it so far and where to go in the coming months. As if to match the scale of the conversation, huge sheets of paper were spread across the center of the room, which scribes marked up with the gist of what was being said.

There was no lack of confidence to go around — just the kind of infectious naiveté that drove some of these same people to take and hold Zuccotti Park back in September. They reviewed their favorite things about what they'd done since then: moments that captured the world's attention and, especially, the ones in which they shed their own fear and had enough fun to want to continue. For better or worse, a lot of this is still fixated on defying the NYPD, rather than really challenging the economic order or movement building. A lot of them spoke highly of the barricade-removing hijinks of New Year's Eve, which was fun if you were there but didn't play very well in Peoria.

"We're somewhere between a movement and a revolution," concluded Austin Guest, a 31-year-old with sideburns on only one side of his thick, brown beard. He added that, if they wanted to, they could bring down Bank of America in six months. Whenever there was a break, someone would jump up on a chair and start telling radical jokes. Why do anarchists only drink coffee? How many feminists does it take to screw in a light-bulb? Somebody else would already know the punch line and shout it out, while others burst into laughter until they could hardly breathe. This was not the mood one would expect to find in a bygone movement.

Nor would one expect the litany of upcoming actions reeled off by a woman named Tammy, who, as part of the Interoccupy project, was helping to coordinate occupations nationwide. There would be "Occupy the Dream" protests on MLK Day. On Jan. 20, Move to Amend would be organizing actions throughout the country against

corporate personhood. There was Occupy Education on March 1, a global day of action on May 12 and actions against the G8 and NATO summits in Chicago later that month. Other people added more: an Egypt solidarity march on Jan. 21, a day recognizing violence against women on Feb. 14 and a mobilization in D.C. marking the anniversary of Dr. King's assassination on April 4.

In the minds of many, the crown jewel was the global general strike that Occupy Los Angeles called for May Day— though

ready been talking about setting up child-care centers, schools, kitchens, free clinics and worker-owned co-ops, especially in the public spaces they're hoping to re-occupy in the spring.

From start to finish, there was almost no talk of the presidential elections — what virtually everyone else in this country thinks of when they think of politics for the year ahead. The closest those at the meeting came was one quick mention of protests at both parties' conventions and a call for voter noncooperation.

By omission, it seems, this movement intends to create a countervailing narrative to the election-year joust among the powers that be, to get people thinking about a whole different kind of politics. It's no small task to compete with an election that will spend more money spent in it than ever before imaginable; the movement will need to offer people something more hopeful, more compelling and more tangible than any presidential candidate can promise to deliver.

In order to do so, some believe that the movement needs a national coming-together, an Occupied convention to hammer out points of unity. A group working to develop what it calls the "99% Declaration" — controversial for its embrace of legislative demands and representative politics — has called for a "National General Assembly" in Philadelphia on July 4, with delegates elected through its website. The General Assembly at Occupy Philadelphia has countered by passing its own "National Gathering Process Proposal," which insists that it would only host such a convention if it were planned and peopled by the other Occupy GAs.

One of that proposal's drafters, Nathan Kleinman, explained to me at the Jan. 8 meeting, "This is not about the gathering itself, this is about how to organize one." As always in the movement, process takes precedence. Kleinman is also one of the creators of Interoccupy, where conference calls are now being used on a daily basis by Occupy activists around the country to work together on a variety of projects.

Another national convergence is also in the works, with the same organizers as the occupation at Freedom Plaza in Washington, D.C. (Though it has now joined the Occupy fold, Freedom Plaza was actually being planned months before Occupy Wall Street was first called for in July.) Dubbed

*Continued on page 7*

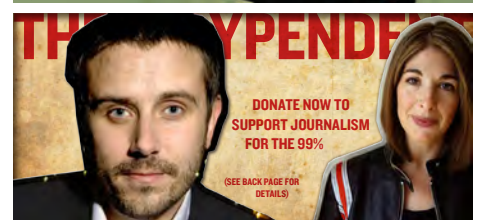
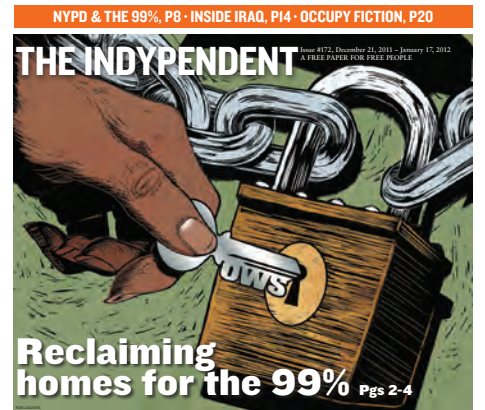


**MARCHING ON MLK DAY:** Wearing a '99%' scarf, a woman holds a sign demanding jobs for the unemployed at a Jan. 16 rally and march from Union Square to Zuccotti Park.

pulling anything close to that, given the state of organized labor in the United States, would seem next to impossible. "I'm totally in love with the general strike," said one middle-aged man, describing himself as an artist who for years has lived below the poverty line. "To me it's analogous to seeing the face of God." He also suggested bringing 10,000 people to Battery Park to watch the sun set on the summer solstice, led by Native American shamans.

After the open brainstorming, the facilitator, a tall man with a blond rattail, tried to guide the meeting toward specific "throughline projects." These, he explained, are big ones that the whole group can put its energy behind, that would string the isolated days of action into an overarching story, disrupt the pillars of support for corporate power and liberate more space that a new kind of world could fill. Break-out groups discussed what these projects might be.

One group centered its discussion around mounting occupations of foreclosed homes and defunded schools. The group that attracted the most people was devoted to shut-downs: banks, ports, malls, you name it. A New Jerseyan named Chris, who started the famous We Are the 99 Percent blog, called for balancing these disruptive actions with making the movement "a healing force." Lots of fingers wiggling high in the air — this went without saying. People had al-



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# NYC's Deadly Deal with Israeli Apartheid

BY SHERRY WOLF

A deadly drone, modeled on the dragonfly insect, with a 9-inch wingspan. Four-wheeled mini-robots with panoramic video-imaging capabilities that perform surveillance without risk of harm to their human monitors. Unmanned armored bulldozers that can demolish property without exposing their distant operators to retaliation. These are just a few of the weapons in an arsenal developed or under development by New York City's newest partner — the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology.

A few days before Christmas last year, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced plans for a \$2 billion research campus to be constructed in partnership with Cornell University, Technion and the City of New York.

Proclaiming that “New York City’s goal of becoming the global leader in technological innovation is now within sight,” Bloomberg pledged \$100 million in taxpayer money for the new venture. It will be added to a \$350 million gift to Cornell from alumnus Charles F. Feeney to fund construction of the 2 million-square-foot state-of-the-art research institute to be built on Roosevelt Island, which lies in the East River between Manhattan and Queens.

New York’s media, including its “paper of record,” the *New York Times*, ran with the giddy story of the estimated 20,000 construction jobs, 600 new businesses, billions in projected revenue and 30,000 permanent jobs that will supposedly result from the research campus. Touting sophisticated environmental

standards of construction and energy use, press releases have also heralded the educational opportunities this campus could offer not just experts, but budding scientists in New York’s public schools.

With rare exceptions like WBAI’s *Law and Disorder* and the website Mondoweiss, the media neglected to mention Technion’s extensive military and political connections to apartheid Israel. Shir Hever, an Israeli researcher, explains that Technion “has all but enlisted itself in the [Israeli] military.”

Technion is a sort of MIT and Harvard rolled into one. Founded in 1923, before the state of Israel, Technion’s first palm tree was even planted by none other than Albert Einstein. The Haifa-based university schools the military and academic elite of Israel.

According to Montreal-based social justice collective Tadamon, 80 percent of Israel’s NASDAQ companies and 74 percent of its electronic companies are run by Technion graduates. Active-duty Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers, officers and reservists are granted a range of perks by the university — none of which are available to Palestinians, who do not serve in a military that largely exists to maintain and extend Israel’s 64-year occupation of Palestinian land.

Under the anodyne classification of “applied sciences,” Technion’s research accomplishments read like a what’s what of science fiction, full of unmanned drones, pilotless surveillance gizmos and driverless bulldozers.

The *Jerusalem Post* reports that Tech-

nion’s D9 unmanned armored tank performed so magnificently during Israel’s massacre of 1,400 Gazans in the 2008-09 Operation Cast Lead that the IDF doubled its order.

Journalist Max Blumenthal reported about the drone plane based on the dragonfly, with a 9-inch wingspan and 8-inch body. According to a quote Blumenthal cited from the American Technion Society website, “The plane’s relatively low speed enables it to easily enter rooms through small windows and to send back photos from a miniature camera.”

Technion personnel have worked on means to track human eye movements — in collaboration with Elbit, a key developer of Israel’s apartheid wall, illegal under international law, that slices through the occupied West Bank.

Technion is also a global expert in developing mini-robots capable of traversing rubble and planting bombs, as well as building “surveillance snakes” — whose goal is to explore the tunnels that are crucial for transporting desperately needed banned goods into blockaded Gaza, where 1.6 million Palestinians barely scrape by.

In this era of neoliberalism, Technion’s invention of clever military gadgets that require minimal labor is a budget-cutter’s dream come true.

Not surprisingly, Palestinians aren’t the only victims of Technion’s “applied sciences.” North America’s own apartheid wall along the U.S.-Mexico border uses surveillance technology developed by Technion. And stealth drones that the United States has used to such deadly effect in

Pakistan are also developed by Technion.

With U.S. unemployment still devastatingly high — even the right-wing *New York Post* admits real unemployment is 15.6 percent — it’s hardly surprising that news of this enormous construction and research project is widely viewed as a boon to New York’s economy.

But under the guise of research, this deal would cement a lucrative bond between the financial capital of the U.S. empire and Israel’s military-industrial complex.

Protest against this deal has already appeared from the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI). Calling on Cornell to scrap its joint campus project with Technion, the USACBI argued:

They provide the knowledge that undergirds Israel’s ongoing colonial project. Technion, like all Israeli academic institutions, is deeply complicit with Israel’s military, providing it with the technological infrastructure to maintain and expand its ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their land.

Is it any wonder that an institution best known for stealth technology is hiding its real actions, in cahoots with the billionaire mayor and other city officials, beneath a cloak of academic respectability?

What is true of Cornell’s collaboration with Technion is also the case for New York



JAMES GORDON/SEAWAY

**LETHAL:** Technion-Israel Institute of Technology has developed an arsenal of hi-tech weapons including aerial drones similar to this one. Mayor Bloomberg recently pledged \$100 million in city funds to bring Technion to New York.

City. Since New Yorkers are being asked to pay \$100 million toward this deal, we should at least be able to debate whether we want to bankroll apartheid’s wars and ghettos.

We have to question the reason for this research in the first place. Why must there be unmanned contraptions used to spy on and target a hungry, dispossessed population? Why are billions of dollars and great mental effort being directed toward developing machines that kill or maim — or help to do so — surreptitiously anywhere in the world?

True, many major research institutions have contracts with military and espionage outfits the world over. But the architects of this colossal deal, which would use significant public funds, have been mute about the nefarious activities of one of its partners.

Why? If they have nothing to hide, let them pitch the deal for what it is — a con-

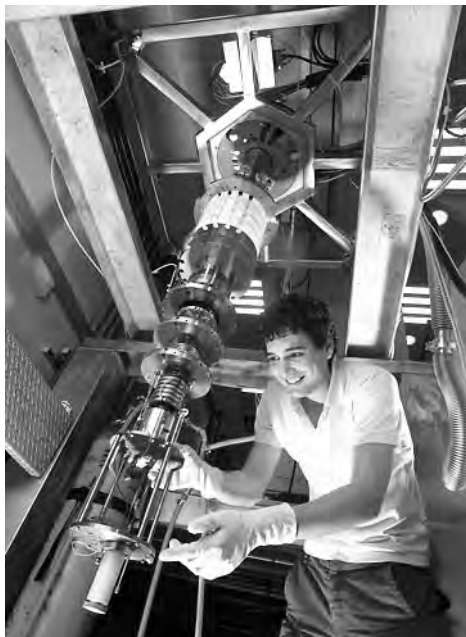
tract with apartheid’s enforcers.

Why, we have to ask, in a city known the world over for its multiculturalism and diversity, is a research institution that will serve ethnic cleansing even tolerated?

New York City is home to the world’s largest Jewish community living outside of Israel — around 2 million people. It is also home to one of the largest Arab communities in the United States — more than 370,000, according to U.S. Census figures.

It would be a sick tribute to the militarized profit system if America’s foremost urban symbol of ethnic diversity and cosmopolitanism, New York City, winds up home to an institution devoted to stealth warfare to achieve ethnic segregation.

*This article was originally published on SocialistWorker.org.*



**TRAINING:** An aspiring scientist at Technion.

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# Handcuffs and Herb in the Hood

## BLOOMBERG’S POT-BUST CRUSADE CONTINUES

By STEVEN WISHNIA

Despite a well-publicized police order instructing officers not to use bogus pretexts to justify marijuana arrests, New York City remains the pot-bust capital of the United States.

Preliminary figures released in late November indicated a slight decline in arrests for misdemeanor possession of marijuana in the two months since Police Commissioner Ray Kelly told police to arrest people for marijuana only if it was genuinely “open to public view,” because having a small amount in your pocket has been decriminalized and does not warrant an arrest. The department had come under criticism because the basis for many pot busts was that defendants had emptied their pockets when told to do so by police — and when they did, they brought their marijuana into “public view.”

In practice, little has changed, say defense attorneys and legalization advocates. “It still is happening a lot,” says Sydney Peck, a Brooklyn public defender. “A police officer pulls marijuana out of someone’s pocket, and all of a sudden, it’s marijuana in public view.”

Since New York State decriminalized marijuana in 1977, possession of less than 25 grams of marijuana has been a violation carrying a maximum \$100 fine for a first offense. Since Mayor Rudolph Giuliani made petty pot offenses a police priority in the late 1990s, however, the vast majority of people arrested have been charged with possession in public view — a misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of three months in jail, with a conviction bringing a permanent criminal record. More than 85 percent of those busted are black or Latino.

To be prosecuted for marijuana in public view, explains Odalys Alonzo, chief assistant to Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson, the defendant has to be observed either smoking in public or displaying a glassine or plastic package that police recognize as marijuana. “Sometimes, we see three people charged for one joint, because we’ve seen them passing a joint,” she says.

The apparent decline may be simply because the preliminary figures are incomplete, says Queens College sociologist Harry

Levine, who has tracked drug arrests in the city since the late-1980s crack era. Others cite random and seasonal fluctuations in arrests. In any case, the city’s courts continue to see a heavy flow of marijuana defendants. By mid-November, pot-misdemeanor arrests in 2011 had already exceeded the 45,500 in 2009, and the year’s total might surpass the 50,400 in 2010.

“The volume seems to have kept up,” says Scott Levy, a lawyer with the Bronx Defenders, a public-defender group. The biggest change since Kelly’s announcement, Levy suspects, may be in how complaints are phrased. Police, he says, are increasingly reporting that they saw a defendant “take an object and put it in their pocket” and then found it to be marijuana when they searched them, but “our clients are saying that they never had it out.”

Joshua Saunders, a staff attorney at the Brooklyn Defenders Society, another public-defender group, says he’s seen a lot of “dropsy” cases, in which police say they saw the defendant drop the marijuana on the ground. He points to the police report of a man busted for three bags of pot in the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn in November. It says the officer observed the man on the sidewalk in front of a bodega “in possession of a quantity of marijuana which was open to public view and which informant recovered from defendant’s pants pocket.” Saunders wonders if the man had “transparent pants.”

Gabriel Sayegh of the Drug Policy Alliance estimates that “depending on the borough, anywhere between 50 and 75 percent of the arrests are completely bogus.” Though some arrests come from smoking in public, he contends that most come from illegal searches, such as when officers patting down people for weapons go through their pockets and find marijuana, and then arrest them for having it in public view.

If the police had really changed their search-and-arrest policy, he says, “we would expect to see a bigger drop” in arrests.

### FEWER NIGHTS IN JAIL

One significant change is that most people arrested for misdemeanor marijuana possession in New York are now given criminal

summonses called “desk appearance tickets” (DATs), instead of being put through the system, held in jail overnight and arraigned the next morning. (In the Giuliani era, they often had to spend two days in jail before being arraigned.) People who receive DATs are usually held for about four hours and given a date to appear in court. Unlike a traffic ticket, however, a DAT involves a criminal charge.

This has become a general policy with misdemeanors in the city over the past couple years, says Alonzo. Defendants who qualify as reasonable risks — who have some combination of family ties, a stable address, and a phone in the city; are in school or working; and have no outstanding warrants or open cases — are given DATs.

In recent arraignments in Brooklyn Criminal Court, a Depression-era stone edifice in downtown Brooklyn, it’s rare to see more than 10 percent of the defendants coming in from a night in jail charged with marijuana offenses. Most of the ones that do have other charges — possession of a knife, possession of stolen property — or warrants for their arrest.

One is a sullen, long-jawed man with a goatee. The prosecutor says he hooked up a deal for an undercover cop to buy a \$10 bag of marijuana, and then demanded a \$5 tip. His lawyer questions the “odd set of facts,” but doesn’t object to the \$1,000 bail — the defendant has a recent felony conviction for assaulting a police officer. “No fuckin’ marijuana,” he curses as he’s led back to jail. A white-haired man, police say, ran away after he was stopped for urinating in the street, throwing his bag of pot on the ground. That gets him charged with attempted tampering with evidence, which carries up to a year in jail. He pleads guilty and gets “time served,” the time he spent in custody.

Meanwhile, in one week in December in the Bronx, one-third of the DAT cases, 37 out of 111, were for misdemeanor marijuana possession, says Scott Levy. Those arrests were from September, he cautions, but the pattern holds for more recent cases in Brooklyn. One morning in court there between Christmas and New Year’s Eve, on a day so slow that the same judge handles both arraignments and DATs, 10 marijuana

defendants pass through in two hours. Eight have DATs and two went through the system. All are black or Latino.

“Defendant charged with Penal Law 221.10,” the bailiff calls out, intoning the state criminal code’s number for marijuana in public view, and the defendant trudges up to face the judge. There is a body-language disparity: The lawyers, both prosecutor and defender, place their hands on the bench in front of them. The defendants hold their hands behind their back, as if handcuffed. This is a rule.

A goateed, sunken-eyed man in a red sweatshirt emerges from the glass-enclosed booth where defendants who spent the night in jail sit. He pleads guilty in exchange for four days community service. The prosecutor had asked for \$1,500 bail because he had a five-year-old warrant. He rocks nervously as the judge reads the boilerplate language of plea bargains. “Did anyone force you to plead guilty? Do you understand you’re giving up the right to cross-examine witnesses?”

A young dreadlocked man in baggy jeans, work boots and a brown padded winter vest gets one year “ACD” — adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, also known as a conditional discharge. That means if he doesn’t get arrested again in the next year, the charges will be dismissed and the record will be sealed. It’s an almost automatic disposition for first marijuana offenses, but he has a prior arrest for misdemeanor assault. He walks out smiling.

The next pot defendant has already had an ACD on a previous bust, so the prosecutor doesn’t want to deal. He gets released without bail — known as “ROR,” for “on his own recognizance.”

A teenager from Bedford-Stuyvesant pleads guilty, but gets ACD.

A gray-bearded man’s lawyer questions the police report. The marijuana “was recovered from my client’s person, and yet it was open to public view?” That gets the charges dismissed.

Another teenager gets ACD after his lawyer notes he’s applying to college.

A woman charged with simple possession — Penal Law 221.05, a violation — has the charges dismissed.

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### BELOW 14<sup>TH</sup> ST.

- WBAI - 99.5 FM  
120 Wall St., 10th fl.
- DC 37 Headquarters  
125 Barclay St.
- Bluestockings  
172 Allen St.
- LES Credit Union  
39 Avenue B
- Housing Works  
126 Crosby St.
- Hudson Park Library  
66 Leroy St.
- Seward Park Library  
192 E. Broadway at Jefferson St.
- Whole Earth Bakery  
130 St. Mark’s Pl.
- Mamoun’s Falafel Restaurant  
22 St. Mark’s Pl.

### Brecht Forum

- 451 West St.
- Shakespeare Books  
716 Broadway at Washington Pl.
- Theater for the New City  
155 First Ave.

### 14<sup>TH</sup> TO 96<sup>TH</sup> ST.

- Epiphany Library  
228 E. 23rd St.
- Chelsea Square Restaurant  
W. 23rd St. & 9th Ave.
- Manhattan Neighborhood Network  
537 W. 59th St.
- Muhlenberg Library  
209 W. 23rd St.
- St. Agnes Library  
444 Amsterdam Ave. (btwn W. 81st and 82nd Sts.)
- George Bruce Library  
518 W. 125th St.
- Book Culture  
526 W. 112th St.
- Morningside Heights Library  
2900 Broadway
- Harlem Library  
9 W. 124th St.
- Trufa Restaurant  
140th St. & Broadway
- Hamilton Grange Library  
503 W. 145th St.
- Uptown Sister’s Books  
W. 156th St. & Amsterdam
- Bloomingdale Library  
150 W. 100th St.

### ABOVE 96<sup>TH</sup> ST.

### BROOKLYN

- Brooklyn Museum  
200 Eastern Pkwy.
- BAM  
30 Lafayette Ave.
- Tillie’s of Brooklyn  
248 DeKalb Ave.
- Tea Lounge  
Union St. & Seventh Ave.
- Video Gallery  
310 Seventh Ave.
- Ozzie’s Coffee Shop  
249 Fifth Ave.  
57 Seventh Ave.
- Verb Café  
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th St.
- Pillow Café  
505 Myrtle Ave.
- Sisters’ Community Hardware  
900 Fulton St.
- Pacific Street Library  
25 Fourth Ave.

### Outpost Café

- 1014 Fulton St.
- Blackbird Café  
197 Bedford Ave.
- ’sNice Café  
315 Fifth Ave.
- High Bridge Library  
78 168th St. & Woodcrest Ave.
- Bedford Library  
496 Franklin Ave.
- Parkside Deli  
203 Parkside Ave.

### BRONX

- Brook Park  
141st St. & Brook Ave.
- Mott Haven Library  
321 E. 140th St.
- High Bridge Library  
78 W. 168th St.
- Mi Casa Bakery  
18 E. Bedford Park Blvd.

### STATEN ISLAND

- St. George Library Center  
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A stocky, middle-aged man with a shaved head pleads guilty to disorderly conduct, a violation, in exchange for time served.

An Afro-Caribbean woman who looks dressed for a job interview, in a navy blue jacket and black tights, her hair neatly pulled back, gets one year ACD. She's a home healthcare aide. Her arrest was the result of "lazy cops," says her lawyer, Sydney Peck of Brooklyn Defender Services; the people smoking pot around her ran away, and she was "just there."

The last pot defendant of the morning's session went through the system. He has a warrant, so his case is postponed until the afternoon.

The healthcare aide's ACD is immediately sealed. This is important, explains Peck, because even a minor marijuana arrest can have "collateral consequences."

Those consequences, says Saunders, can include having a citizenship application delayed, being denied re-entry to the country if you have a green card, being barred from moving into public housing, being denied student loans, not being able to get a commercial driver's license, and losing licenses to work as a home healthcare aide, a security guard, or a barber. Some of these, such as the immigration issues, affect people who have not been convicted, but have open cases.

Conversely, says Alonzo, prosecutors are allowed to unseal ACDs to show the court that the defendant has a prior record. They do this for all marijuana offenders, she says.

Though ACDs are almost automatic for a first marijuana offense, says Saunders, they last a year, instead of the six months typical for other charges. Second offenders, says Alonzo, will get community service if they have relatively few "contacts" with the system, jail time if they have a more serious record.

Pot-misdemeanor offenders with two other arrests and one conviction within the past year land in the city's Operation Spotlight program, which flags them for "enhanced prosecutorial attention." This means that prosecutors refuse to offer plea bargains, says Saunders. About half of judges, he estimates, will let these defendants plead guilty in exchange for time served, but others will give five or 10 days in jail.

## THE RACIAL DIVIDE

Brooklyn is slightly less than 40 percent white, but none of the day's 10 pot defendants is. The racial disparities in New

York's marijuana arrests are stark. Since the Giuliani crackdown began, almost seven-eighths of the more than 500,000 people popped have been black or Latino, mostly young men.

"I don't think I've ever seen a white person run through the system for marijuana," says Saunders, a public defender for five years. (At the arraignments I observed, the few whites were there mainly for domestic violence complaints — where arrest can be mandatory in some cases — and on a Mon-

day morning, for drunk and disorderly.)

than 8 percent millionaires. It averaged a mere 35 pot busts a year, in a population of more than 200,000. The highest rate, more than 25 per 1,000 residents, came in the Lower East Side's 7th Precinct, one of the city's smallest, where heavily Latino and black housing projects abut a gentrified bar-and-party district.

Two adjacent Brooklyn precincts, the 73rd in Ocean Hill-Brownsville and the 75th in East New York, accounted for almost 5,000 marijuana arrests a year. The 73rd had the

second-highest rate in the city. Its 82,000 people are 96 percent black and Latino. The East New York precinct produced the most arrests, averaging more than 2,800 a year. Its 175,000 people are 90 percent black and Latino.

Some of this can be explained by high crime rates and the ecology of drug use. Brownsville and East New York, which contain some of the city's poorest areas, had seen 26 murders each as of Dec. 18, while the Upper East Side had had one. Marijuana use and dealing among the young and poor tends to be more public and therefore more exposed to arrest, especially in a heavily policed neighborhood.

This also makes them "easy targets," says Saunders, when "police have an enormous incentive to make as many arrests as they can" and "there's no disincentive for bad arrests." In a city government obsessed with "metrics" such as evaluating schools almost solely on their test scores, running up arrest numbers is a strong way for police, both officers and commanders, to demonstrate productivity and win promotions.

Marijuana arrests are also relatively safe and easy, notes Harry Levine, and can be financially lucrative, because "the easiest way to get overtime is to make an arrest at the end of a shift."

However, few can deny the racial overtones of Giuliani's crackdown on petty offenses that led to the explosion of marijuana arrests. Elected with 70 percent of the white vote and less than one-third of the black and Latino vote, he catered to whites who had both a legitimate fear of crime and a perception that the mere presence of black and Latino youth constituted a "broken window," in his favorite criminologists' phrase. Bloomberg, though he has been much less openly antagonistic to the black and Latino communities than Giuliani, has quietly sustained the marijuana-arrest policy for more than twice as long.

Whether or not this policy is consciously racist — there are those who would argue that concentrating massive arrests in black and Latino neighborhoods is, especially if many are based on questionable procedures — the racial disparities at each step of the process, from street policing to sanctions on repeat offenders, add up and compound like unpaid credit card debt. The racial ratios have remained remarkably consistent throughout the cannabis crackdown's 15-year history.

The number of people arrested for marijuana possession in New York City in 2011 would be enough to fill almost every seat in Yankee Stadium. Levine dismisses the policy-change announcement as a "PR measure."

"They want to create the appearance that they're responding to public pressure," he says.

*This article was originally published on Alternet.org.*

## YOU BET I DID

Mayor Bloomberg's marijuana-arrest policy contrasts sharply with his personal history. Asked by a *New York* magazine reporter during his 2001 campaign if he'd ever smoked weed, he responded, "You bet I did. And I enjoyed it."

However, Bloomberg announced barely a week after he took office that less-privileged tokers would remain a top police priority. The administration claims the policy reduces crime. "Marijuana arrests can be an effective tool for suppressing the expansion of street-level drug markets and the corresponding violence," a mayoral aide told the *New York Times* last year.

The mayor has plenty of company as a pothead-turned-prohibitionist. As House Speaker, Newt Gingrich proposed the death penalty for people smuggling more than 100 joints' worth. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas wrote the 2001 ruling that marijuana had no medical value. President Barack Obama inhaled as a youth and wrote sympathetically of a friend who got busted for buds, but his administration's stated policy has been that "legalization is not in the president's vocabulary."

—STEVEN WISHNIA



CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS/FLICKR

*Continued from page 3*

"NOW DC" — the National Occupation of Washington, D.C. — it's supposed to begin on Mar. 30 and run for as long as one month. Several of those behind it met in New York on Jan. 7 (at the office of this newspaper) to start setting NOW DC in motion. They also

came to 16 Beaver the next day. While Occupy Wall Street was still deciding what to do for the next few months, this group was well into discussing how to do it.

"The Occupy movement isn't really into planning the way we are," said Kevin Zeese, a onetime Ralph Nader campaign manager, during the NOW DC discussions. And he's

right. Even while meeting to plan and strategize, those at 16 Beaver weren't ready to do away with the improvisational, reactive free-for-all that had brought Occupy Wall Street to the world's attention in the first place. An organizer with a red, white and blue bandana over his long, curly hair pointed out that their most carefully planned marches

had tended to stay on the sidewalks, where police wanted them. "We took the road only when we didn't plan ahead," he said. "Let's just remember that."

*Nathan Schneider is an editor at Waging-Nonviolence.org, where an earlier version of this article was published.*



# Astoria's Arab Street

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY LAM THUY VO

It's been almost a year since Hosni Mubarak was ousted by his own people as part of an uprising that started with massive protests on Jan. 25. Since then, Egyptians have nervously watched their country's first steps toward democracy — even those all the way in Astoria, Queens.

"To us, this was like a dream come true,"



**USAMA SHARIK** is an electrician who relocated to the United States from Egypt two years ago. His wife and children are still in Egypt.



**A STORE ON STEINWAY STREET** in New York's 'Little Egypt,' a neighborhood in Astoria, Queens.

said Sherif Ahmed about Mubarak's resignation last year. But the shop owner in the borough's "Little Egypt" isn't satisfied with the aftermath.

Ahmed, 38, is particularly unhappy about the interim government, known as the Supreme Council of Armed Forces. This temporary junta has been leading the country with an iron fist, and he worries that its repressive rule has endangered recent parliamentary elections in Egypt.

"We are very disappointed," he said. "After the revolution that inspired the world we had hoped for a better outcome."

The neighborhood burst into jubilant celebrations when Mubarak resigned. But as the Feb. 11 anniversary approaches, this joy has subsided and turned into skepticism. Many residents of Little Egypt watch the political events in their country with mixed feelings.

Sixteen-year-old Randa Elgamal laments that the revolution has failed to resolve any serious economic issues, many of which led to the protests in Egypt. She still supports her



**SHERIF AHMED** is a store owner in Astoria, Queens said that he has been active in organizing events for the community to keep up-to-date on political issues in Egypt.

people but wishes more had been done since the revolution to improve lives on the ground.

"Nothing is changing," she said. "After everything that's been going on we had hoped things would be better."

Usama Shafik is still hoping that the change in leadership will pave the path for

a better future in his country. The 45-year-old electrician only relocated to New York from Egypt two years ago and will visit his home country "to see how things are" in the

coming weeks.

"We won't know for sure how things will be until after parliamentary elections have ended," he said. "I hope it will be better because the president before wasn't good."

As for Ahmed, he still hasn't given up hope. During last year's protests he started organizing weekly meetings for the local community to discuss ongoing issues in their home country and hasn't stopped since. He screens videos from an Egyptian group that is monitoring political progress in the country, hoping to keep up interest in the long and rocky road toward democracy.

"Just because I'm in the United States makes me no less of an Egyptian," he said.

## REFLECTING ON A REVOLUTION

### PANEL:

*Tahrir Square, 2012: The Voices of Women and Religious Minorities*  
March 1, 2012 | 6:30-8 PM

- Viola Shafik, Freelance Lecturer and Filmmaker
- Yasmin Moll, Department of Anthropology, NYU
- Mona Eltahawy, Awarding-Winning Journalist
- Dina Ramadan, Assistant Professor of Arabic, Bard College

19 Washington Square North, Events Space  
To attend, please RSVP to  
19wsn.rsvp@nyu.edu

Four women — a filmmaker, journalist and two academics — will discuss the experiences of women and minority populations during Egypt's revolution and the role digital and social media will play in

the country's future political landscape.  
nyuad.nyu.edu

### ART:

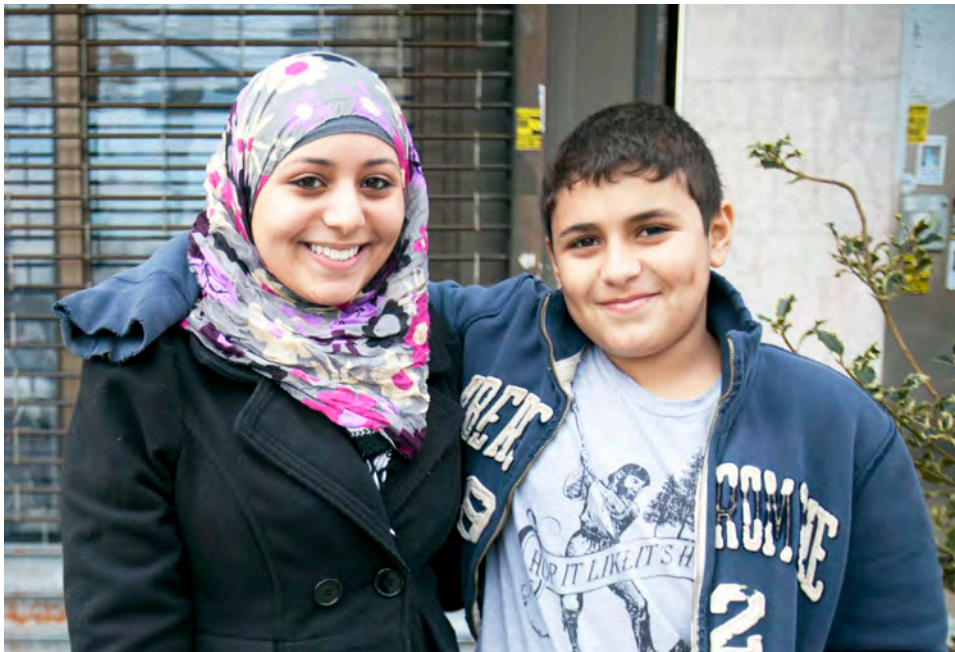
*Contemporary Photography in the Middle East*  
Feb. 8, 2012 | 6:30-8 PM

- Yasser Alwan, Cairo-based Photographer
- Shamoon Zamir, Associate Professor of Literature and Visual Arts, NYU Abu Dhabi

19 Washington Square North, Events Space  
To attend, please RSVP to  
19wsn.rsvp@nyu.edu

Alwan and Zamir will discuss the importance of documenting the lives of ordinary citizens in Egypt, the Middle East and North Africa.  
nyuad.nyu.edu

—L.T.V.



**RANDA ELGAMAL, 16, AND HER 13-YEAR-OLD BROTHER** on Steinway Street. Elgamal is of Egyptian origin and has been disappointed with political events in her home country.



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# A Year After Tahrir

TEXT & PHOTOS BY DAVID ENDERS

CAIRO — Nearly one year after some of the largest demonstrations in Egypt's history drove dictator Hosni Mubarak from power, the country's revolutionaries are resigned to the idea that revolutions take years, and that theirs is far from realized.

Eve Radwan, 24, participated in last year's demonstrations, and although Mubarak is on trial, she and many others believe that the military council that has officially ruled the country since Mubarak's departure has no intention of giving up power.

Since March, more than 12,000 civilians have been subjected to military trials and the military has engaged in deadly repression of dissenters. The generals who make up the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, many of whom served under Mubarak, had initially said they would transfer power to civilians within six months before suggesting that it might be as long as two years before presidential elections were held, prompting widespread demonstrations in November demanding that the military hand over power to a civilian government without delay.

"The revolution will continue, definitely. There's no way to go back. There are people who have lost children, there are people who have lost their eyes. What are we supposed to do? Everyday we lose one of us," Radwan said on a sunny day in December after riot police and the military attacked a sit-in in front of the country's parliament building, pelting demonstrators with rocks from the top of the parliament and other buildings nearby.

Tahrir Square, where last year's demonstrations took place, is once more the center of revolutionary violence. The names of the streets that lead to the square have become synonymous with violence as security forces have repeatedly clashed with demonstrators during the last year, using tear gas, live gunfire, rubber bullets, pellets and rocks. Scores have been killed and thousands have been injured.

"Before the revolution I was planning to leave Egypt, to study in France. But this is my country," Radwan said as security forces pelted demonstrators with rocks in the street behind her.

The military council has resorted to building walls to keep anti-government demonstrators in Tahrir Square from blocking the parliament and cabinet buildings. Concrete barriers have also been erected on Qasr al Aini, a major thoroughfare in the capital.

It is largely instances of police brutality similar to those that sparked the demonstrations last January that have brought people back into the streets.

"The people in the square want justice for those who died today and yesterday. The shooting began at night, when there was no coverage from the media," said one demonstrator after a night of violence in November when four others were killed by live rounds. "Today will be just like yesterday, but there will be more demonstrators, and more will be killed."



## MAKE MEDIA, MAKE REVOLUTION

*Formed after last January's revolution, the Mosireen video collective produces videos that have helped illuminate what's happening in Egypt in the face of a government-led propaganda war (See main article). Beginning this summer with Tahrir Cinema in Cairo, Mosireen has held regular public screenings that have taken place in 15 of the country's 27 governorates. The screenings draw a cross section of Egyptians, and almost inevitably spark heated debate. Mosireen also trains people to make short films, how to live stream, and how to get what they see on the streets onto the internet and out to the world. The collective's YouTube channel, which allows mobile downloads, has received hundreds of thousands of views for some of its videos of police and army brutality against demonstrators. Lobna Darwish, one of the collective's six core members, recently spoke with The Independent.*

**INDY:** Why is video so dangerous to the government?

**DARWISH:** There is a propaganda war. It's been Mubarak's tool and then their tool since I was born. It is one of the most powerful tools to make people delusional, to make people apathetic, to make people distrust each other. That's why we needed to create our own media, the people's media, revolutionary media.

It's very hard to change the language, it's very hard to change how people think. When you don't see with your own eyes, you have to be shown. A lot of people know but pretend they don't know because they can't deal with the pain of it. But you have to be forced to see it, then you can do what you want.

**INDY:** What thoughts do you have as the anniversary the revolution approaches?

**DARWISH:** There is a revolution taking place in Egypt, but most international media doesn't deal with it that way. They tell the story of a revolution that took place in 18 days and then there are clashes with the army. No. There is a revolution taking place, revolution is a very long road, not just in Egypt but everywhere. Some places are more advanced than others but we're all trying, and not only is the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces able to have this propaganda campaign inside Egypt, telling people that these people in Tahrir are thugs, but also international media is helping this campaign without intending, by telling this fairy tale of 18 days and then success. Mubarak was not the goal, the people wanted to topple the regime, and we will go on fighting until we get it.

*For more information, see mosireen.org.*

—David Enders



**UNSTOPPABLE:** (Counter-clockwise from top) Demonstrators in Cairo's Tahrir Square surround a disabled police van. (Above right) A woman votes in Egypt's recent parliamentary elections. (Far right) Members of the Muslim Brotherhood pray during a November rally in Tahrir. (Below right) Egyptian riot police have used live gunfire to kill scores of demonstrators in the past few months. (Center) A female protester gathers some rocks on the way to an anti-government demonstration.



plans for reforming of the Ministry of Interior and the police forces that prompted so many Egyptians to take to the streets, but it is unclear to what extent they might be allowed to implement such proposals, or if the party itself is cohesive enough to do so once in power. The initial months after Mubarak's departure demonstrated the party is not monolithic, with some members forming

breakaway parties. But the Brotherhood has been preparing for this moment for decades and is loathe to let it go.

The last round of elections, held under Mubarak in 2010, were marked by fraud and intimidation.

"Before there were two or three of these men standing inside the polling station, closing the doors," Dina Zakaria, a mother



of two who has been active with the Brotherhood for 17 years, said after casting her vote. "They would give a permission to very few persons to get inside, sometimes shouting, asking a lot of questions, like, 'What are you doing here?' I said, 'I came to vote.' He says 'You're not allowed,' I say, 'Why?' Just like that. Sometimes we would cry. So you see now? It's changed completely. That's one of the fruits of the revolution. At last they know their purpose is to support our freedom, not to interfere. If this does not happen, we'll go back to the streets."

## ELECTORAL POLITICS

In Alexandria, the country's second largest city, people waited patiently outside polling stations under umbrellas as it rained off and on into the afternoon on the first day of voting. At midafternoon, before an announcement that voting would be extended countrywide until 9pm, some lines were still hundreds of persons long.

Egypt has not had a free election in more than 60 years, and Adel, an English teacher, echoed the sentiments of many others as he stood in line to vote.

"We are deciding who we will be in the future. We have the power of voting here, and we are doing it very well today."

Many Egyptians appeared ready to give elections a chance, hoping that the new parliament might find a way to effect change.

Hazem Hilal is a candidate with Kotla, a grouping of mostly secular parties that appeared to be posing the greatest threat to the Brotherhood's dominance. Even before all the ballots had been cast, Hilal was thinking about organizing for the next round of elections, though it is unclear when those might take place.

"The Muslim Brotherhood has been organizing for over 30 years. They have experience in election campaigns."

Kotla members have painted the election campaign as a contest between secular and Christian Egyptians and conservative Muslim parties.

"It is a battle between people who want a civil country and strict Muslim country. This parliament will only be for one or one and a half years, and its main goal will be to write a constitution. People are divided. If the constitution will not serve a civil country, then we have failed in this battle."

## THE BATTLE OF IDEAS

But for many, the battles are still in the streets rather than at the polling stations. The surest sign Egypt's revolution remains unfinished is Maspero, the state television and radio building. Perched on the Nile River, the building has been the site of demonstrations against Egypt's government, including one in October in which more than 30 people were killed, some brutally decapitated when they were run over by Egyptian Army armored personnel carriers.

Maspero has continued to broadcast official lies while Egyptian demonstrators are cut down in the street. Nonetheless, the messaging seems to be well

*Continued on page 12*



# New Egyptian Unions Face a Clampdown

BY JANO CHARBEL

**CAIRO**—The success of the uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak was made possible by the initiative of workers in key sectors of the Egyptian economy, not exclusively by the popular occupations of Tahrir and other city squares. A public transport strike across metropolitan Cairo, coupled with labor protests along the Suez Canal — along with other industrial actions across the country — helped bring down Mubarak.

The revolution has given birth to the first independent trade union federation in Egypt's history — the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU), along with the formation of farmers' federations and unions. It has also spurred authorities to seek to dissolve the board of the state-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), which had monopolized the union movement — by law — since 1957.

The revolution has also led to the drafting — but not the issuing — of a new trade union law guaranteeing union freedoms and autonomy. Moreover, Egypt has moved towards the re-nationalization of some companies privatized during Mubarak's 30-year rule.

Yet, 2011 was also marred by numerous violations of workers' rights. According to Karam Saber, Director of the Land Center for Human Rights, "The greatest setbacks to Egypt's labor and union movements this year" include: the issuing of a new law criminalizing strikes, the forceful dispersal of strikes by hired thugs and security forces, and the referral of striking workers to military tribunals."

Saber added, "Other setbacks include: the ruling authorities' failure to issue the new trade union legislation, and as a result, the non-recognition of independent unions. There are also neglected labor rights, unpaid bonuses, mass layoffs, factory closures, and lockouts."

## INDEPENDENT UNIONS

Established on the fifth day of the revolution, the EFITU now has an estimated membership of more than 1.6 million workers, employees, and pensioners. Well over 100 independent unions and professional associations have emerged since the revolution.

Previously non-unionized workers, including fishermen, commercial divers, supermarket employees, seasonally employed-laborers, nurses and hospital staff, electronic journalists, pottery craftsmen, and quarry workers, have established their own independent unions.

Furthermore, thousands of unionized workers have quit the state-controlled ETUF and have established independent unions. They include Cairo's public bus drivers, fare collectors, engineers and employees, who established the Independent Union of Public

Transport Authority Workers in March.

Egypt witnessed a wave of strikes in 2011 — well over 200 were reported throughout the country. These work stoppages affected numerous industries throughout the public, private and informal sectors of the economy. Among the largest and most significant strikes were ones involving transport teachers, doctors and transport workers and textile workers in the industrial city of Mahalla. There were also thousands of labor protests, marches, hunger strikes, occupations, sit-ins and sleep-ins. The EFITU and other independent unions have played a significant role in leading these actions.



**LABORING FOR A UNION:** Above, some 8,500 workers went on strike against the Suez Canal Authority in June 2011, demanding better wages and benefits.

Even police forces, which are strictly prohibited from striking, did so in Cairo and other cities in February, and again in October. The Interior Ministry was partially burned down during the October strike, and policemen's salaries were raised by 200 percent.

## WORKER DEMANDS

Most of the labor protest has been fueled by similar demands: higher wages, payment of overdue bonuses, safer working conditions, full-time contracts for full-time work. Rather than the monthly minimum wage of \$215 that EIFTU and other labor groups have been calling for, the Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Finance agreed to set the minimum wage at \$125 per month. This new minimum wage officially came into effect as of the beginning of 2012, but may not be enforced. A maximum wage for management has not been determined.

The tumult of the past year has taken a toll on business. According to media reports, state-owned and private enterprises have incurred hundreds of millions of pounds worth of losses due to strike actions causing the Cairo Stock Exchange to plummet. Transport strikes and blocked roads have also inconvenienced commuters.

The Egyptian media has responded by introducing derogatory new terms in its coverage of labor unrest, terms that did not exist prior to 2011. These include *ta'ateel* 'agalet al-intag' ("halting the wheel of production") and *fe'awiya* ("sectoral/industry-based") to describe labor protests and worker demands as selfish and parochial in comparison to the broad, patriotic concerns of those who participated in the Tahrir Square uprising.

In an unprecedented move, the interim cabinet in April issued a law criminalizing strikes and protests that "harm the national economy." The law was officially enacted in June, but has rarely been enforced.

## REVERSING PRIVATIZATION (SORT OF)

Numerous legal cases have been brought before the judiciary prior to and since the revolution — for an adequate monthly minimum wage, for the dissolution of the state-controlled ETUF, for the re-nationalization of Egyptian companies, and for the repeal of the law criminalizing strikes.

One tentative legal victory for workers occurred Sept. 21 when the Administrative Court nullified privatization contracts for three companies upon finding that they were illegally privatized, having been sold to investors for less than their real market value.

The court ruled that the Indorama Shebin Textile Company, the Tanta Flax and Oils Company, and the Nasr Company for Steam Boilers are to be returned to the public sector. The privatization contracts of

two other companies — the Omar Effendi department stores, and the Nile Cotton Ginning Company — were similarly annulled by administrative court rulings in May and December, respectively.

According to Gamal Othman, a worker-activist at the Tanta Flax and Oils Company, "Our company, and our rights as workers, have been raped by the Saudi investor who bought this company." Othman pointed out that upon its privatization in 2005, the company employed some 2,300 workers on ten production lines, but that "now we're only 300 workers operating only two production lines."

Although a court ruled in favor of annulling this company's privatization contract, the verdict is being appealed. According to Othman, "The Ministry of Investment and other governmental authorities are appealing against this verdict because they claim that they want to protect investors' rights, and that they don't want to scare investors away from Egypt. We also want to protect investors' rights — but not if this means that the investor is allowed to violate the rights of workers and the rights of Egyptian state."

A longer version of this article originally appeared at [almasryalyoum.com](http://almasryalyoum.com).

## Revolution in the Streets

*Continued from page 11*

targeted — a number of Egyptians readily believe the government's assertions that the revolutionaries are foreign-funded, intent on undermining Egypt's sovereignty and delivering it to outside powers.

Never mind that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces takes more than \$1 billion a year from the United States. The army still appears to be, in the minds of many, the "guardian of Egypt."

## MUBARAK'S POLICE STATE

For many, the police state led by Mubarak is still in place. Just as security forces held demonstrators at a makeshift underground prison beneath the Egyptian Museum, a downtown landmark, after the anti-Mubarak demonstrations that began last January 25, demonstrators in November and December were held underneath the parliament building.

Milad, a volunteer doctor at the Omar Makram Mosque, one of the three field hospitals near Tahrir, said the hospitals have been raided regularly, and doctors and patients have been arrested.

"Me and the other doctors faced a lot of violence. We were attacked by the military with big sticks, hitting us in our bodies and our heads," Milad said after street battles in December. "They were using electricity, they were using anything possible."

The demonstrators who attempted to re-occupy the square, which has been cleared forcibly by the police and military twice since March, were mostly men who had been injured during what Egyptians refer to as the January 25 Revolution. Among them as well were relatives of some of the nearly one thousand people who were killed by security forces in January and February before Mubarak stepped down. One of those injured was Alaa, who came from Qena, about 10 hours' drive south of Cairo.

"In the morning they sent the police and they kicked us here and threw us away," Alaa said. "After that we went there, to our other friends, the other victims. After that they hit us again, there and here and everywhere, and we escaped. We are injured. You can see, they have no mercy with us."

Demonstrators were calling directly for Field Marshall Hussein Tantawi, the head of the military council, to step down without delay. In past weeks, the chants in Tahrir Square have mocked the Brotherhood, asking "where are they?"

The Brotherhood, meanwhile, patiently waits for its time to come.

"They said they will hold presidential elections in June," said Mohamed Soudan, a spokesman for the Brotherhood. "We believe them, and we trust them; it was a pledge from the military council, and if they do something else, at that time there will be more talking."

*David Enders has covered Middle East politics since 2003. He is the author of Baghdad Bulletin: Dispatches on the American Occupation.*



# Egyptian Women HALF OF SOCIETY BUT STILL A MINORITY

BY DINA SADEK

CAIRO—Egyptian children are taught about the superiority of men over women beginning in the first grade. School textbooks show the boys playing in the front yard while the girl helps her mother in the kitchen. At home, the father leaves the house as he pleases while the mother toils at her household chores. Early in life, the new generation learns who serves whom.

Growing up in this atmosphere girls lose confidence that they can do anything other than be a cook and a baby-making machine. This is fine by the men who don't want them to aspire to anything more than that.

Yet, when the call went out last January to take to the streets and make a stand for freedom against the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak, women were right alongside men in making the Egyptian revolution happen. They rallied side-by-side with men in Tahrir Square, showing exceptional bravery in the frontlines of protests, inhaling tear gas and sleeping in tents during sit-ins.

But once Mubarak was driven from power, we saw that the "Republic of Tahrir" did not magically change everything. Women have continued to play a vital role in the protests and in many of the new political parties but their participation falls on deaf ears. In the post-revolutionary cabinet headed by Prime Minister Essam Sharaf, there was only one female minister.

In response, Egyptian feminists called a "Million Woman March" on March 8 (International Women's Day). Turnout was small and almost as soon as the women gathered in Tahrir Square they were outnumbered and beset upon by male counter-demonstrators chanting slogans like "Go home, wash clothes" and "You are not married, go find a husband." The counter-demonstrators then violently pushed their way through a small protective ring of men and attacked the women, forcing them to scatter. The police who were standing nearby did nothing.

"When we talk about women's rights, the response is always: 'Now isn't the right time,'" said Rana Khalil, 22, a recent college graduate.

The government of the current prime minister Kamal el-Ganzouri has appointed two women cabinet ministers both of whom were given minor posts. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and the political parties have scrapped a Mubarak-era law that set a quota for the number of women in parliament leading former U.S. President Jimmy Carter to project that the newly elected Egyptian parliament will have one to two percent women.

Meanwhile, women continue to routinely experience sexual harassment when they are out in public. Those who join protests can be targeted for special abuse.

Some women detained at protests by the military have been subjected to virginity tests by a male military doctor with other

soldiers present in the room. Most of the victims of this practice have remained anonymous but one, Samira Ibrahim, 25, has defied the conservative taboos of our society and sued the military-led government.

In December the State Council Administrative Court ruled in Ibrahim's favor banning the SCAF's virginity tests on female detainees. Women marched to Tahrir Square chanting against the military in celebration of the court order.

"I also filed a sexual assault charge but the court decided to lessen the charge," Ibrahim told *The Independent*. "They are the enemy, the judge and the authority and I am just a little woman facing them." Still she remains determined. "If the revolution succeeded, my case will," she added.

The military's mistreatment of female protesters showed its face again in December when soldiers in Tahrir Square were filmed dragging and beating a young woman whose robe was torn off exposing her bare torso and a blue bra. The identity of the "blue bra girl" remains unknown but the attack sparked a rally of a couple thousand women who took to the streets to denounce the SCAF. In a rare move, the military leadership apologized for the incident.

Whether women can collectively assert their power more often in the future remains to be seen. The revolution raised great expectations. Unfortunately, many men are unwilling to relinquish the innate sense of superiority with which they have been raised and are content to be little Mubarak in their treatment of women.

*Dina Sadek is a Cairo-based freelance journalist.*



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# Art in the Revolutionary Square

TEXT & PHOTOS BY URSULA LINDSEY

CAIRO — On Jan. 7, under a clear chill sky, the monthly culture festival al-Fann Midan (Art Is a Square) took place in Cairo’s ‘Abdin Plaza. In the sunny esplanade facing the shuttered former royal palace, spectators cheered a succession of musical acts, took in a display of cartoons and caricatures, and wandered from tables selling homemade jewelry to others handing out the literature of the Revolutionary Socialists or the centrist Islamist party al-Wasat. The drama troupe Masrah al-Maqhurin (Theater of the Oppressed) put on a series of skits requiring audience participation. In the first, a daughter left the family house, against her father’s will and with her mother’s connivance, to attend a birthday party. She was caught and reported by her brother and then beaten by her father. In the participatory iterations that followed, a young woman from the audience chose to play the brother and, to much laughter, told the sister: “I won’t tell Dad I saw you in the street if you don’t tell him I was at the café.” Another audience member played the mother, working arduously but in vain to convince the father to allow the girl out of the house under her brother’s supervision. Interestingly, no one in the audience chose to incarnate — and change the behavior of — the authoritarian and violent father.

The cultural event occurred about three weeks after army and police forces had killed at least 16 protesters outside the cabinet building, not far from ‘Abdin, and wounded hundreds of others. In the evening, a small open-air theater showed footage of the recent army assaults. The mood was a mix of light and dark, of hopeful respite and melancholy.

Al-Fann Midan is one of many artistic initiatives that have sprung up since the uprising that began on January 25, 2011. Although the legal framework in Egypt has not changed (Emergency Law and laws against defaming religion, the army and the state remain in place), what Egyptians call the January 25 Revolution has undoubtedly ushered in a new sense of freedom, as well as a determination to use public space to congregate and connect and to demonstrate support for the uprising through cultural activism.

## NOT YET A SUBJECT

When his group began recording songs in 2006, says 25-year-old rapper Mezo teMraz, “There were limits. We would comment on society in a funny, indirect way.” Today, his label, Revolution Records (accessible on Facebook), puts out tracks with titles like “Our Revolution, We’re Gonna Finish It” and “Down with Military Rule.” The refrain of the latter runs: “It looks like you forgot who we are/You think we’re still scared/We saw death and just smiled and stood there/

Let me remind you since you’ve forgotten/ We’re the revolutionary generation.”

The revolution has accelerated the valorization of Egypt’s burgeoning youth culture and its “underground” and “independent” artists. “After the revolution people started looking to independent artists more,” says teMraz. “Everyone feels that new independent groups will be heard now.”

The uprising has also, not surprisingly, led many artists to explicit political engagement. That desire for relevance has inspired some truly innovative work, alongside plenty of well-meaning but forgettable “revolutionary art.” Revolution Records’ songs are earnestly on message,

blankets and helmets.

For another, it is too early for artists or anyone else to map the contours of the current juncture with any clarity. In late January 2011, there was a rupture in the reality Egyptians had known for so long. Many artists and novelists, returning home elated, if exhausted, from weeks of protesting, simply scrapped whatever work they were doing. Since then, the rapid pace of events — or, many would say, of reversals — has rendered it nearly impossible to fix a vantage point from which to consider developments. The Egyptian revolution is not yet a subject of art; it is an ongoing experience.

*The revolution’s faith is enough now  
For her house of worship is the square  
And her Qur’an today is her Testament  
And her Testament is her Qur’an*

So runs the opening “Fatiha” (referring to the first chapter of the Qur’an) of Hasan Talab’s collection of verse, *The Revolution’s Testament and Its Qur’an*, whose plaudits for the original uprising’s religious tolerance will strike some as bittersweet in view of the sectarian clashes and state-directed incitement against Copts in the autumn of 2011.

Talab’s volume is composed of matter-of-fact renderings of major revolutionary themes, with poems called “Enough,” “Bringing Down the Regime” and “We Are All Khalid Sa’id,” invoking the name of the young man from Alexandria whose summer 2010 beating death at the hands of police galvanized one of the seminal pre-revolutionary Facebook campaigns. In such direct, literal references to the revolution and its heroes, Talab is not alone. As Negar Azimi, who writes often on Middle East arts and culture, notes in *ArtForum* magazine: “A survey of titles of works from recent exhibitions in Cairo reveals the following: ‘Freedom,’ ‘Drink Freedom,’ ‘Shadow of Freedom,’ ‘People Demand,’ ‘Man Crying’ and so on. ... This, it turns out, is the sort of revolution-kitsch the market seeks. To be blandly political is in vogue and to be apolitical risks flirting with philistinism.”

Yet a few have the grace and insight of the Egyptian-Palestinian poet Tamim Barghouti in his epic colloquial poem “O People of Egypt” (Ya Sha’b Masr), recited on several

occasions but, it seems, not yet out in print. Barghouti, like Talab, also uses religious references (bismillah, meaning “In the name of God,” is an opening formula and an aya is a verse of the Qur’an), but in his verses they suggest the restless motion of the future, how the revolution remains to be achieved and lived and told:

*By the Prophet, I beg you, don’t say:  
That will do  
Rejoice and keep going, don’t say:  
That’s enough  
This revolution is a beginning  
Like a migration, like a birth  
This revolution is a bismillah,  
Come on, finish the aya,  
See how it improves on every reading  
How each verse runs to the next  
Passing the torch, without pause  
So that tomorrow our lives will be the  
story of those  
Who went to bed barefoot and woke up lords*

**TRUTHS STRONGER THAN FICTION**  
In film as well as in writing, the documentary has largely trumped the fictional.  
In the wake of one of the most televised



**WHEN THE STREETS ARE ALIVE:** Street art in downtown Cairo that was part of an awareness-raising campaign last spring.

with little of the verbal playfulness one expects from rap. “The revolution made us feel that we love Egypt,” says teMraz. “We try to put our point of view through music,” to create “very political direct songs that make people rise up.”

It is not easy to combine aesthetic and political ambitions in order to creatively address the revolutionary moment. For one thing, many artists and writers have continued to be active — they have little detachment from the events of the last year, and their energies are depleted by their participation in protests, organizing meetings and advocacy campaigns. In their political work, they, like their fellow citizen-activists, can face significant personal risk. In late December, at a press conference convened to deny army responsibility for the violence visited by soldiers on protesters, a blustering member of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces suddenly denounced Muhammad Hashim, head of the independent and widely esteemed publishing house Merit, as one of several conspirators being investigated for instigating attacks upon the army. His crime, it appears, consisted of supplying protesters with

## KEEPING UP WITH THE REVOLUTION

Cairo bookstores are packed with titles about the January 25 Revolution. There is a great deal of poetry. But so far, the books are almost exclusively works of nonfiction: collections of photographs; anthologies of essays or newspaper columns by well-known public intellectuals, spanning the months before and after Hosni Mubarak’s ouster; and *yawmiyyat* (diaries) born of direct experience of the uprising. Even poetry and fiction about the revolution does not dare stray far from the historical record.

The content of this literary production focuses almost entirely on the momentous 18 days at the beginning of 2011, from January 25 to February 11, at the end of which Mubarak resigned the presidency. There is little attention thus far to the muddled year that followed. The style is very often documentary, with writers intent on transcribing their personal experience of the historic events. The tone of such work tends to be wholeheartedly celebratory of the “Republic of Tahrir,” as the mass sit-in at the iconic downtown Cairo plaza was dubbed.

In many cases, a nostalgic note already rings out:



revolutions ever, a flurry of documentaries, amateur and professional, local and international, have been released. The three-part *Tahrir 2011: The Good, The Bad and the Politician*, appearing in December, is a well-intentioned effort that captures revealing details: one protester's "body armor" fashioned ingeniously out of cardboard; the treatment of several others for hysteria in Tahrir Square's field clinic on Feb. 10, date of Mubarak's penultimate speech, in which he announced that he would not step down. (One day later, he did.) Most interesting are the troubling interviews with defensive, arrogant, disingenuous state security officers in the movie's middle section. But the film feels slapdash, relying much too heavily on footage widely viewed on the Internet. Why, Egyptians seem to have felt, go to the movies to watch YouTube clips? The film played to nearly empty theaters at two upscale cinemas in December, even as protesters fought the police in downtown Cairo.

Fictional filmmaking, meanwhile, has lagged behind. *Tamantashar Yawm* (18 Days) — an amalgam of shorts by well-known young Egyptian directors — is so far one of the only feature-length cinematic treatments of the revolution. It was produced very soon after the original uprising and screened at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival,

Some of *18 Days*' stories are funny and touching, and most of them are not set among the protesters or in Tahrir. Instead, the screenwriters and directors circle around the revolution, looking for outside angles, coming at the uprising indirectly. But almost all of the pieces suffer from indifferent cinematography and — much more gravely — make use of political symbolism so pointed it amounts to assault by metaphor. Even the better ones cannot seem to resist final shots that thuddingly overplay their hand: an embrace in front

of a tank; a blood-soaked banknote; a confession by a murdered political prisoner that simply reads: "Freedom ... freedom ... freedom." Ironically, both *Tahrir 2011* and *18 Days* — with their rehearsal of the same well-known dates and reprise of the same oft-viewed news footage — make the revolution seem familiar, even stale.

Italian filmmaker Stefano Savona, on the other hand, has produced a lovely documentary, *Tahrir: Liberation Square*, the realization of a complete and deeply personal vision. Savona spent almost the entirety of the original uprising in Tahrir Square, at times at considerable peril to himself. His film has no narration and no interviews. Instead, it immerses the viewer in the mysterious and awesome flow of the revolution — through shot after stunning shot of the action in the square, where the filmmaker followed one group of youths, capturing everything from their conversations about the country's future to their battles with the ubiquitous thugs, and every mood from anxiety to communion to laughter. One long, almost dreamlike sequence simply registers the endless stream

**Open-air movie screenings, free cultural festivals, touring theater troupes, street art — these forms and events create new venues and new audiences — and start conversations.**

of faces passing by the square's welcoming committee, who flank its entrance and chant: "Al-Masriyyin ah-hum! Al-Masriyyin ah-hum!" (Here they are, the Egyptians!) The committee members are commending the new arrivals, but — for those watching months later — their cheer also refers to themselves. These are the Egyptians, indeed. It is the most moving paean to the ecstatic, transformative solidarity of Tahrir that I have seen.



**ART IN THE SUBWAY:** Commuters pass by photos of the revolution in the Cairo metro.

### STREET ART VS. ART ART

Tahrir Square has from the start been a space for performance of the most serious and passionate kind. If over the period from one January to the next the thrilling drama seems to have deteriorated into an absurdist play, in which the same despair-inducing violence is staged over and over again, it remains daunting for art to compete, in rel-

of defiance, an appropriation of public space and a running political counter-narrative.

But attempts to channel the creative energies of the street into more conventional settings have largely fallen flat. Several Cairo galleries have had shows featuring graffiti artists, but the work they have produced in designated art spaces has been listless and superficial, lacking the jolt of discovery that is so much a part of the form.

### NEW AUDIENCES, NEW VENTURES

In these tempestuous and trying times in Egypt, art projects that engage with the revolution as an ongoing process, rather than an event to be encapsulated or commended, seem to be the most fruitful. Open-air movie screenings, free cultural festivals, touring theater troupes, street art — these forms and events create new venues and new audiences, mix art and politics, and start conversations. Many of these ventures have unabashedly gone about the business of consciousness raising. But, generally, they do not seek to make programmatic statements or issue manifestos; they simply want to show and to share. A slew of novels and films that address the revolution in more conventional terms is no doubt around the corner, but it will probably take time for the true classics of the historical moment to emerge.

In the meantime, Egyptians have productions like the *Tahrir Monologues*, a fluid, unadorned enactment of personal stories from the bounteous 18 days. Actors — a few professional, but most of them amateur — take turns stepping on stage and delivering short, often poignant accounts of solidarity, enlightenment, fear, violence and change. The stories were collected in Tahrir Square itself, as well as solicited online and through social networks. Sundus Shabayik, the young actress and director who started the project, says it was born from the sense that everyone had a story to tell after the toppling of Mubarak. "People loved hearing and telling these stories over and over again."

The *Tahrir Monologues* troupe continues to receive submissions, and each performance is therefore a bit different from the previous one. They are considering incorporating more stories, from after the 18-day uprising in early 2011. The actors' morale tends to rise and fall with the tenor of reports from the street, says Shabayik: "Sometimes, when things are going well, we feel that what we are doing is meaningful. At other times, we wonder: What is the point?"

*Ursula Lindsey has written about Middle East media, culture, education and politics from Cairo since 2002. She is a regular contributor to The Arabist blog. A longer version of this article appeared at Middle East Report Online (merip.org).*



**MILITARY, NO TANKS:** Anti-army graffiti in Cairo. Graffiti has emerged as the signature art form of the revolution.



## Queer History

“Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture”  
BROOKLYN MUSEUM  
200 EASTERN PARKWAY  
THROUGH FEB. 12

When the “Hide/Seek” exhibit opened in November at the Brooklyn Museum, it was greeted by calls from the Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn the Catholic League for the exhibit to be immediately disbanded. As with the “Sensation” exhibit at Brooklyn Museum in 1999 and Andres Serrano’s NEA-funded *Piss Christ* in 1989, the controversy surrounding the exhibit has centered around a single artwork which mixes Christian iconography with worldly filth — in this case, David Wojnarowicz’s unfinished 1987 film *A Fire in My Belly*. The film features ants crawling over a figurine of Christ on the cross. The film is something of a scattershot, super-8 Mexico travelogue; the image of Christ appears for only a few seconds, as do dancing marionettes, masked wrestlers and salacious newspaper headlines. In 2010, when the “Hide/Seek” exhibit was on display at the

National Portrait Gallery, museum officials paid dearly for those few seconds: Amidst pressure from legislators and talks of public defunding, the museum pulled the film from the show, which in turn caused some private backers to withdraw their support.

At the Brooklyn Museum, the film is back on view, as is the rest of the exhibit. It’s well worth seeing and, like me, you may be surprised at how conventional most of this show feels. Remember that this exhibit was originally curated for a Smithsonian museum, a stone’s throw from the National Mall. This is not a show of young upstarts or brash rebels — this is a show of American classics.

“Hide/Seek” works as a brief overview of 20th-century American art, and many of the works are portraits of other artists, like Berenice Abbott’s lovely 1926

photo of Djuna Barnes, or Alice Neel’s gawky 1960 painting of Frank O’Hara. The show begins with Thomas Eakins’s 1898 painting *Salutat*, in which a lithe, near-naked male boxer waves to a cheering crowd, his body stark



*Riverfront No. 1*, George Bellows

against the black-clad viewers, all men. Elsewhere, painter Paul Cadmus presents two wonderfully distorted scenes of post-war post-surrealism, which dare to imagine sexual liberation as a triumphant virtue of enlightened cultures, and George Bellows’ 1915 paint-

ing of a noisy urban riverfront shows a fleshy, charged world of barely-suppressed desires. Andy Warhol’s 1957 drawing of a ludicrously flamboyant bit of footwear — called *Truman Capote’s Shoe* — is a message from one gifted queer artist to another, a gold-leafed communiqué from a more closeted era. Not all of the artists in “Hide/Seek” are gay, but they all show a sensitivity to love and sex outside of heterosexual norms. Even Andrew Wyeth, a stalwart exemplar of traditional American draftsmanship, shows up with 1979’s *The Clearing*, a work of unambiguous homoeroticism.

Ironically, as the show moves closer to the present day, the artwork becomes less open and more coded (about sexuality, anyway). With the HIV/AIDS crisis raging, gay artists were given a dark world to work in. Robert Gober’s

lonely 1992 stack of reproduced newspapers hints at an alienated life in *Reaganized America*; Keith Haring’s 1989 *Unfinished Painting* shows a boisterous, cartoonish scene, quickly unraveling into the void of an unused canvas (the next year, at age 31, Haring died from AIDS-related complications).

And of course, Wojnarowicz’s film is there, too, and I wonder if it was really the film that brought protesters out in the first place. Those accusations of “Hide/Seek” as somehow anti-religious were misguided, but this show does indeed have an agenda, a very noble one. Part of the conservative position against LGBT rights is that queer cultures — queer people — represent a new threat to American society at large. But “Hide/Seek” shows that queer artists have profoundly shaped American culture for generations. From definitive painters like Grant Wood (of *American Gothic* fame), to pop-art pioneers Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg and portrait-photography doyenne Annie Leibovitz, it becomes clear that the history of queer artists in America is the history of American art itself. You can’t backlash against that.

— MIKE NEWTON

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## The LES Lives!

“STREET.LIFE.LIVE. Women Photographers of the Lower East Side: Rebecca Lepkoff, Silvianna Goldsmith, Marlis Momber, Anna Sawaryn & Shell Sheddy, 1968–Present”

14TH STREET Y  
344 EAST 14TH ST.  
THROUGH FEB. 29

Ultra-orthodox Jews, Dominican immigrants, black activists from the Southern states — the Lower East Side has been home to people from a diverse range of backgrounds over the last 50 years.

From its historic role as home to newly arrived immigrants starting in the early 19th century to shifting demographics and increasing gentrification, “STREET.LIFE.LIVE.” tells the story of the transformation of the Lower East Side from 1968 to the present.

The exhibit features the work



Guzman Save The LES

of run-down houses and anti-drug protests remind viewers of darker times, when even the photographers themselves feared for their safety. In the 1970s, the neighborhood became a place where crime and drug abuse metastasized.

“I didn’t even have anything and they managed to steal from me,”

common struggle: making a living.

“We all had a commonality,” said Sheddy. “We were working class, had little money and had to make it work.”

These images also depict an architectural history that has been bulldozed to make way for condos and skyscrapers in the past decade. Many of the “mom-and-pop” shops featured in the show’s photographs have closed down and been replaced by chains. The rate of gentrification has reached such a feverish pitch that the National Trust for Historic Preservation included the neighborhood on its 2008 list of most endangered places.

Sawaryn has lived in the Lower East Side “since the hippies were here” and worries that the gentrification of the neighborhood in the past few years could ruin the neighborhood.

For Sheddy, this fear was enough to curate an exhibition that is in many ways an ode to the neighborhood’s past.

“I think we have to show people that long-term residents are still here,” said Sheddy. “We have to show them that we have a very rich and diversified history.”

—LAM THUY VO



Boy And Tenth Street Fire

of five female photographers — Rebecca Lepkoff, Silvianna Goldsmith, Marlis Momber, Anna Sawaryn, and Shell Sheddy, who is also the show’s curator. While the show aims to remind current residents of the neighborhood’s distinct history, it also focuses on the community’s working-class roots.

Tacked onto the walls are pictures that capture everyday moments — a child dancing on a stage in a white dress, residents standing outside on a hot summer day in the 1970s. One photograph even features Allen Ginsberg’s final poetry reading in New York City at the Knitting Factory in 1997. The photos are shot using a variety of techniques — ranging from infrared film and a pinhole camera to 35mm film and a digital SLR camera — each lending the photographs a different coloration.

The exhibition serves as a reminder of a time when things weren’t as rosy in the Lower East Side, a neighborhood that includes enclaves such as the East Village, Chinatown and Little Italy. Images



Bimbo, I Love Losaida!

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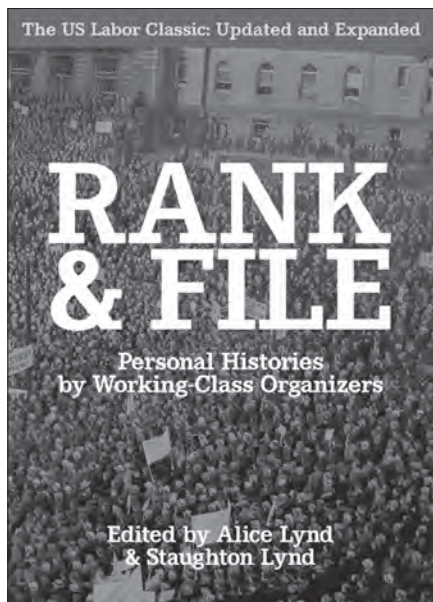
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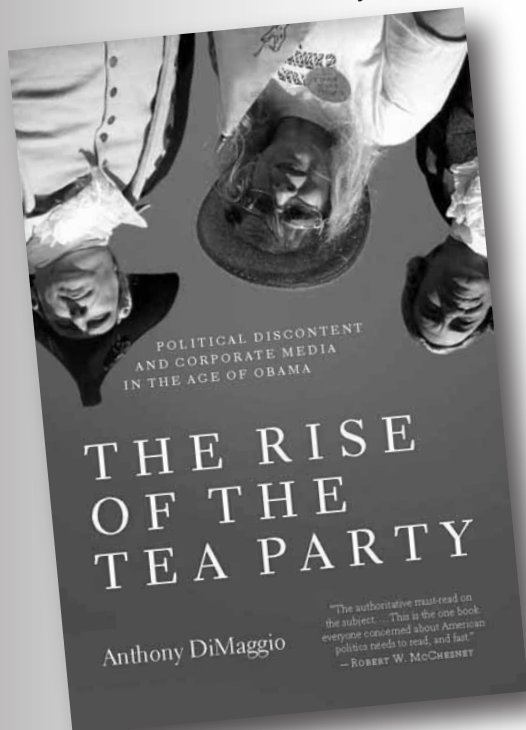
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## Scorched Earth

*Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*

By CHRISTIAN PARENTI  
NATION BOOKS, 2011

*Bird on Fire: Lessons from the World's Least Sustainable City*

By ANDREW ROSS  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011

The United States, racked by drought, fractures into a half-dozen separate fiefdoms. Food and supplies are scarce, and the fabric of society is torn asunder as warring xenophobic clans rob and kill one another for provisions.

Science fiction? Yes, but also a possible future, according to reports commissioned by the CIA and the Pentagon. In his new book, *Tropic of Chaos*, Christian Parenti draws on several of these reports, as well as numerous interviews and in-depth research, to examine recent and ongoing conflicts around the world that are exacerbated by increasingly meager resources.

In northern Kenya, violent skirmishes between nomadic and pastoral peoples result in rising mortality rates as droughts make cattle harder to raise. In Rio de Janeiro, a city known for its street violence and enormous income disparities, migrants from the countryside are pouring into the city's slums, spurred by unpredictable rainfall and crop failure. In an attempt to manage this flux of people, Brazilian police shut down entire streets and carry out nighttime raids against the most dangerous criminals, locking down an already stratified city.

The path of climate change follows the footsteps of imperialism, with the communities that will be most affected by rising sea levels and off-kilter rainfall cycles located in the Global South. These countries are often dependent on agriculture for survival and already suffer from

years of colonialism and resource extraction at the hands of first world powers. Further, Parenti writes, the volatile combination of poverty (induced by neoliberal economic policies), increased militarism and violence is setting the stage for a "catastrophic convergence" in the Global South. By employing "counterterrorism" tactics against resource-poor communities, many struggling nations in the Global South — what Parenti terms "failed states" — are actually making it harder to handle the massive disruptions of climate change. Meanwhile, first world countries are adhering to a doctrine of "climate fascism" — resulting in increased xenophobia and a strengthening of the police state.



GB MARTIN

Ariz. is telling, certainly from a U.S.-centric perspective. Phoenix is, in most aspects, the very model of unsustainability — sprawling single-story housing developments stretch across the desert, a model of urban un-planning common in the West. These places, rather than the denser, older towns like Boston and New York (the latter of which has the smallest carbon footprint per capita in the nation), need the most attention if we're going to transform the United States into a sustainable beacon.

Ross' research is exhaustive: more than 200 civic, business and community leaders appear in the book. He tackles some interesting topics; besides the expected discussions of water scarcity and emissions, we read about the struggle for Native land rights and Arizonans' reluctance to use solar power despite the area's tremendous amount of sunlight.

Arizona, like many rural areas, suffers from what Ross terms a "frontier mentality," despite its heavy reliance on federal funds. Beneath this overlay, Ross uncovers a complex ecosystem of local decision-making. The chapter on solar power, for example, highlights the appeal of owning your energy supply to libertarians and liberals alike. Since Arizona's major utilities control what little subsidies exist to encourage solar-panel installation, they also threaten to pull those subsidies when the budget demands.

*Bird on Fire* seems to imply what *Tropic of Chaos* concludes outright: the world will rely increasingly on state power to effectively mitigate the global climate disaster. The message has shades of paternalism, but it's worth heeding. Even a casual observer of the political disagreements of the last few years would sigh despondently at the end of these books. As Parenti demonstrates, our military already knows what's coming. We can only hope that politicians catch on before it's too late.

—IRINA IVANOVA



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**THU JAN 26**  
2-4pm • Free  
REPORT LAUNCH: BANKING ON VACANCY. Picture the Homeless and Hunter College Center for Community Development will announce the findings of their survey of vacant buildings and lots throughout the five boroughs. Roosevelt House, Hunter College, 47-49 E 65th St 646-314-6423 • picturethehomeless.org

7pm • \$5-10 Sugg  
PERFORMANCE: RYAN HARVEY, “RIOT-FOLK LIVE!” To commemorate the Jan. 25 and 26 hearing dates that have been set for the hundreds of OWS protesters arrested on Nov. 17 for blockading the NYSE, Harvey, who was also arrested, will be hosting a performance for other Occupy participants and supporters. Bluestockings Bookstore, 172 Allen St 212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

**FRI JAN 27**  
8:30-10:30am • Free  
FORUM: CAN THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND OWS MARCH DOWN THE SAME ROAD? Join labor and union organizers as well as OWS activists as they discuss these two movements and try to find common ground. RSVP to Eloiza Morales at the below phone number or eloiza.morales@mail.cuny.edu. Murphy Institute, CUNY, 25 W 43rd St, 18th fl 212-642-2029 • workered.org

7:30pm • \$6-15  
BOOK LAUNCH & DISCUSSION: *TEC-TONIC SHIFTS*. Join authors of this recently released book for a discussion about Haiti’s cataclysmic earthquake and the after-

math that left more than 1.5 million people homeless. Participants will also discuss Haiti’s heightened vulnerability as a result of centuries of foreign policy and neoliberal economic policies and foreign impositions. Brecht Forum, 451 West St 212-242-4201 • brechtforum.org

**SAT JAN 28**  
3-7pm • \$40-45  
FUNDRAISER: 16TH ANNUAL DINNER TRIBUTE TO THE FAMILIES OF PP/POWS. Come and help support Political Prisoners/ Prisoners of War and their families and raise money for prisoner’s commissary accounts. The event will be hosted by Asha Bandele & M1. Keynote speakers include Dhoruba Bin Wahad, a former Black Panther and political prisoner, and a performance by Harlem’s own Poet Laureate, George Edward Tait. MLK Labor Center, 310 W 43rd St 718-512-5008 • mxcc519@verizon.net

**SAT FEB 4**  
2-5pm • Free  
CLASS: KID REPORTERS WRITING AND REPORTING WORKSHOP. *IndyKids* newspaper is offering a free workshop to kids between the ages of 10-13. Kids will learn how to research and write news articles for *IndyKids*. A second workshop will be held at the same time on Sat., Feb. 11. For location information and to RSVP, contact Lisa at info@indykids.org 212-592-0116 • indykids.org

**MON FEB 6**  
7pm • Free  
PERFORMANCE: *THE WORM IN THE BIG APPLE*. Based on the real life experiences of the ensemble, this play tells the story of trying to survive in New York. Created and performed by the 13th Street Housing Works community, this is a “forum theatre” performance, in which the scenes ask a question of the audience, and spectators then intervene

by acting out various alternatives to the problems. Housing Works Bookstore Café, 126 Crosby St 212-334-3324 • housingworks.org

**FRI-SAT, FEB 10-11**  
Various times • Free  
CONFERENCE: BEING THE MEDIA: DESIGN-ING A NEW RRRADICAL MEDIA. Join Paper Tiger TV for this producers conference and design challenge. Design teams will be facilitated by People’s Production House, Deep Dish TV, MAG-Net, Manhattan Neighborhood Network, Democracy Now! and Housing is a Human Right. Presented with the Vera List Center for Art and Politics. RSVP recommended. The New School, Theresa Lang Community and Student Center 55 West 13th St, 2nd fl 212-229-2436 • vlc@newschool.org

**TUE FEB 14-SUN MAR 11**  
Various Times • \$23-25  
PLAY: *CALL ME WALDO*. Join Working Theater for the off-Broadway premiere of Rob Ackerman’s *Call Me Waldo*, directed by Margaret Perry, where extraordinary things happen when an ordinary electrician begins channeling the spirit of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Abingdon Theatre Arts Complex, 312 W 36th St 212-244-3300 • theworkingtheater.org

**FRI FEB 17- SUN FEB 19**  
Various Times • \$20-40  
CONFERENCE: THE RETURN OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT: BUILDING A YOUTH MOVEMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY. Join Young Democratic Socialists as they explore the root causes of rising tuition and skyrocketing student debt, barriers facing students of color in higher education, and how the neoliberal capitalist economy disen-

UPCOMING EVENTS

**WED FEB 1 • 7:30pm**  
SCREENING: *LOOKING FOR LANGSTON*. Come kick off Black History month and celebrate what would have been Langston Hughes’ 110th birthday with this special screening of Issac Julien’s film. Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

**THU FEB 2 • 7:30pm**  
DISCUSSION: *LIVING FOR THE CITY — MIGRATION, EDUCATION, AND THE RISE OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA*. Donna Murch argues that the Black Panther Party started with a study group. Drawing on oral history and untapped archival sources, she explains how Oakland produced such compelling and influential forms of Black Power politics. Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

**SAT FEB 4 • 10am-4pm**  
ONE-DAY SEMINAR: INTRO TO MARXISM & POLITICS — CAPITALISM, CLASS & THE STATE. This session will consist of three lectures on the basic structure of capitalism and its relation to political power. Sliding scale: \$35/\$45/\$55

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**TUE FEB 21**  
7-8:30pm • Free  
READING: THE INDELIBLE INFLUENCE OF MALCOLM X. Participants including Salman Rushdie, Ishmael Beah, Kathleen Cleaver and Darryl Pinckney will take the stage to read from Malcolm X’s speeches, diaries and letters in order to tell his story. Schomburg Center, 515 Malcolm X Blvd 212-491-2200 • nypl.org

**MON FEB 27**  
8pm • \$20  
INDYFUNDRAISER: ALYSE KENNY PRESENTS...IT’S A CHARITY THING! Join *The Independent* for a night of laughs with a great mix of comedians including a few of your favorite political humorists. Performers will include Greer Barnes, Lee Camp, John Fugelsang, Alyse Kenny and more! Gotham Comedy Club 208 W 23rd St 212-367-9000 • gothamcomedyclub.com

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